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From 1899 to digital

The Arden Shakespeare,

Shakespearean critical scholarship and the evolution of English as a discipline

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Shakespeare: Metamorphosis

Senate House, University of London, 25 August 2016



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Outline

- 1 Some **starting points**: Of scholars and publishers
- 2 **The Arden Shakespeare**: Overview
- 3 The **Arden story so far**: three series and four **digital** Ardens
- 4 In **Conclusion**: Speculations and provocations



Whither critical editions of Shakespeare?

- Whither **Humanities** scholarship?

*(Whither **universities**?)*

- Whither **publishing** (and its **editors**)?

Or: *A Tale of Three Hamlets...*



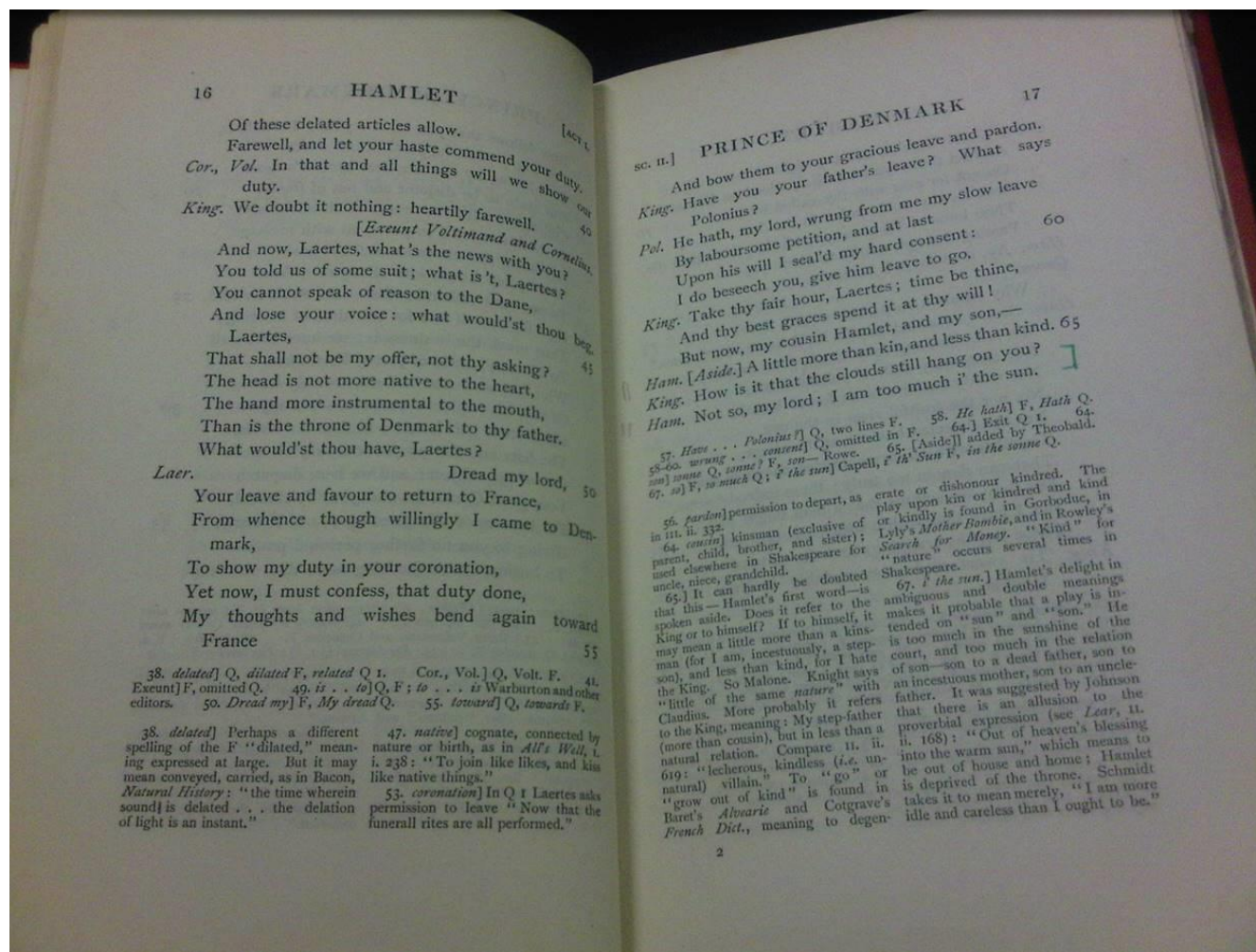
The Arden Shakespeare: overview

- **Why Arden?**
 - **Authoritative edition** of Shakespeare; global status
 - **Publishing values:** consistent since 1899
 - Only **three series** since 1899, **fourth** now being commissioned
 - Dramatic **ownership shifts** between 1980s and 2008: 'ownership' of the series?
- **Sources:** texts/digital products, documents, interviews, sales analysis, Arden sources*

*eg Driscoll and Scott, 1998; Scott, 2010; Proudfoot, 2001; Thompson and McMullan, 2002



Arden 1



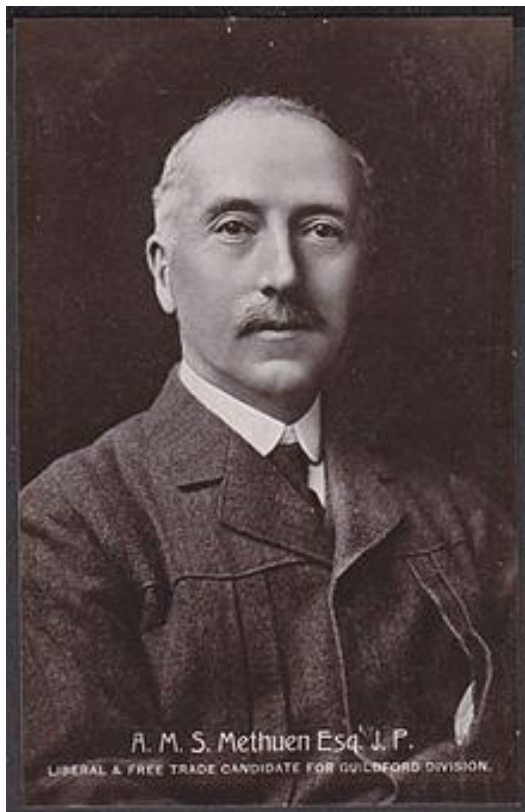


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The Arden Story: Arden 1

Arden 1: 1899–1924

Algernon Methuen



https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php?title=Methuen_%26_Co.

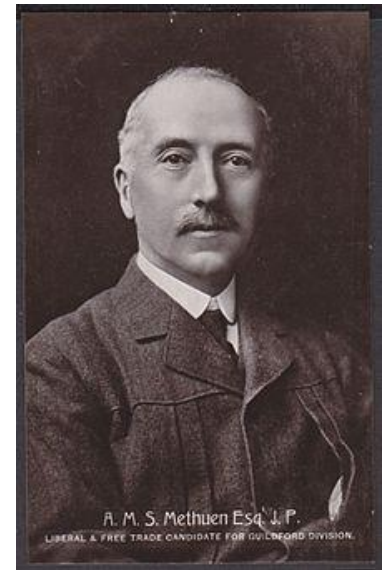
Edward Dowden



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Dowden



The publisher: Algernon Methuen



- **Founded Methuen in 1889:**
 - Hardback publishing for the ‘gentle reader’/ fiction/children’s...
 - H.G. Wells, Dickens, ‘King Wallypug’, theology, languages, science/maths, ‘University Extension Series’
- **Previous popular Shakespeare series’ success:**
 - Eg Macmillan Globe edition, 1860s–1911: 250,000 copies
 - ‘Shilling’ Dicks edition, launched 1864: over 700,000 copies
- **Plus new readerships:**
 - 1870 Education Act
 - Extension / Workers’ Education and ‘Day Colleges’ (teacher training) + Libraries movement + women’s education



The first editor: Edward Dowden

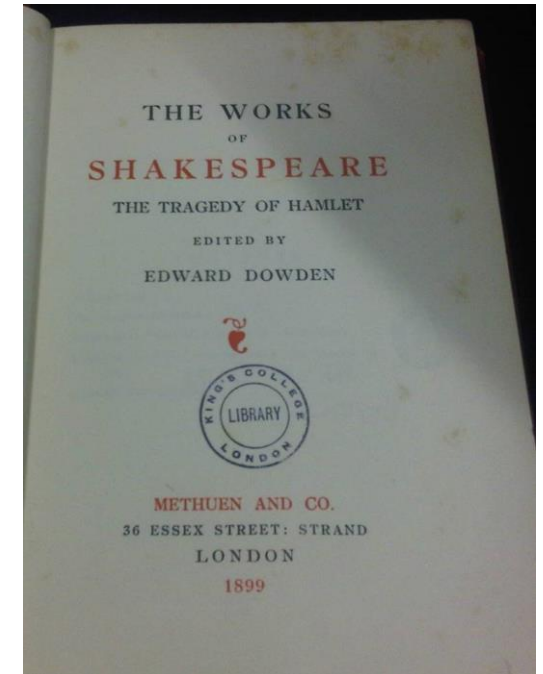
- One of first **Professors of Literature**:
 - ‘... **very light duties and a very light salary**’¹
 - Relied on his writing for **income**:
 - ‘Cassell offers me another £25 for 16 pages on “As You Like it.” (I like it!)’²
 - Before Arden: ‘**Shakespeare mania**’³ + editions of Shelley, Southey, 17thC writers...
- A ‘**corresponding**’ community:
 - Craig, Dr Murray, his fellow literary editors and his publishers
 - A **conversation among equals**, evolving knowledge
- **Late 19th century**: Culture of **scientific** analysis; analytical, ‘scientific’ approach to language (cf OED)

¹ Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.196 / ² 1914, p.225 / ³ 1914, p.194



Arden 1: 1890s to 1920s

- **Texts** from 1864 Cambridge edition, revised 1891–93
- **Innovative:** the first **play-per-volume** series
- **Market:** for **readers**
 1. 'who **care only to enjoy the play** without the retardation or the disturbance of notes'
 2. who 'recognise the fact that many **difficulties** exist in what Shakespeare has written'
 3. '**scholarly readers**, who have a legitimate desire themselves to check or control the work of the editor in the formation of his text' (Methuen & Co, undated)





From Dowden's Introduction to *Hamlet*:

'I have made what I suppose to be new – **perhaps erroneous** – suggestions as to "Take this from this" (II.ii.156) and "tender me a fool" (I.iii.109).

If ingenuities are anywhere pardonable, it is in **conjecturing the meaning** of Hamlet's riddling speeches; it was not his cue ever to talk sheer nonsense; accordingly

I have ventured to throw out, perhaps doubtfully, suggestions....

When what is worthless has been sifted away, a little that is a real addition to our knowledge of Shakespeare may remain.'

(Dowden, 1919, pp.x–xi, *section breaks and emphasis added*)



From Dowden's *Hamlet* notes:

- '264. *Bad dreams*] Malone – perhaps by a printer's error – read "had dreams," a "noble emendation," as Johnson might have called it, attained probably by accident.'¹
- '56. *To be, or not to be:*] Explained by Johnson as a future life, or non-existence after death; by Malone, to lie, or to commit suicide. G. Macdonald regards the words as the close of a preceding train of thought, not to be connected with what follows.'²
- '125. *country matters*] rustic proceedings... I suspect that there is some indelicate suggestion in *country*...'³

¹ Dowden, 1919, p.75 / ² 1919, pp.98–9 / ³ 1919, p.114



Initially low sales: Methuen to Dowden:

‘I am very sorry that the report of the sales of HAMLET is **disconcerting**. You must not base your calculations entirely on the preliminary sales of such a book.

I think it is obvious that a **scholarly edition** of HAMLET cannot have an immediately large sale, and I see no reason why it should not go on selling for a long time,

and you must remember that each volume of the series that appears will give a fillip to the preceding volumes; **the greater the merit, the greater the fillip**.

Everyone has spoken so well of your work and of the plan and appearance of the books, that **I feel sure the edition will fill a void**, as they say.’¹

¹ Methuen, 1900, quoted in Murphy, 2003, pp.206–7 (*section breaks and emphasis added*)



But Edward Dowden withdrew as General Editor:

‘I think you have made Hamlet a beautiful book, & I suppose copies will be bought by a few persons from time to time.

But I am convinced that the sales will not be such as to justify my asking any other person to do what I am unwilling to do myself.’ (Dowden, 1900, quoted in Murphy, 2003, pp.206–7; *section breaks and emphasis added*)

- Dowden produced two further Arden 1 play editions: *Romeo and Juliet* (1900) and *Cymbeline* (1903)



- **General Editors:** Dowden succeeded by W.J. Craig then R.H. Case
- **Play editors:** Included 'amateurs', at least two librarians and one clergyman
- **Scholarly assumptions:** Craig, *King Lear*: 'the ground has been too exhaustively reworked by preceding editors to admit of any new discoveries of importance' (1901, p.xv)
- **Later editions** increasingly reflected **New Bibliography**
- **Only one woman:** Grace Trenergy, 1924 *Much Ado About Nothing*, the final Arden 1
- **1899–1924:** The fastest Arden series completion to date

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Coriolanus	W. J. CRAIG and R. H. CASE
Cymbeline	EDWARD DOWDEN
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Julius Cæsar	MICHAEL MACMILLAN
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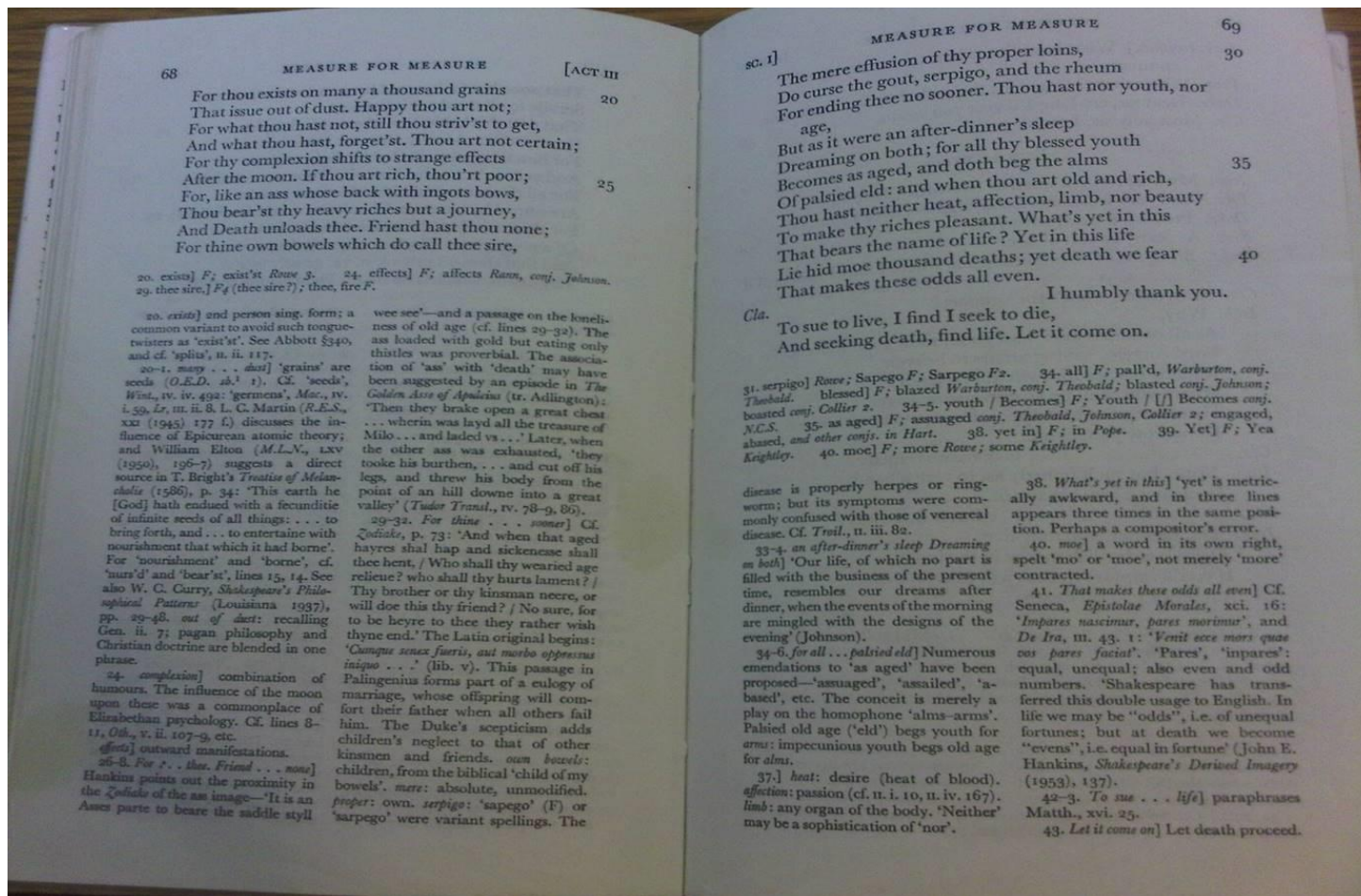
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Arden 2



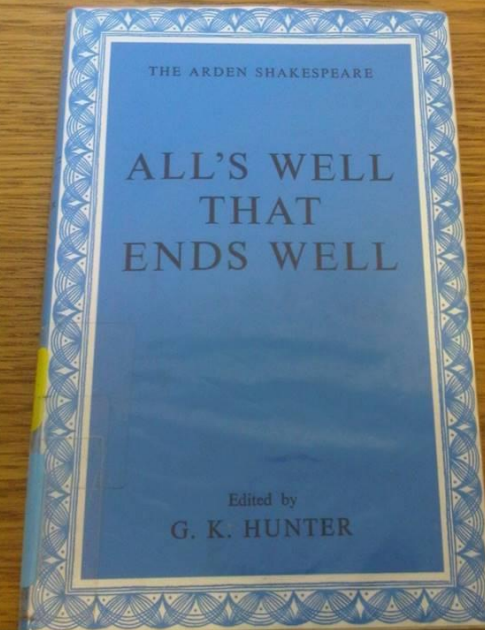
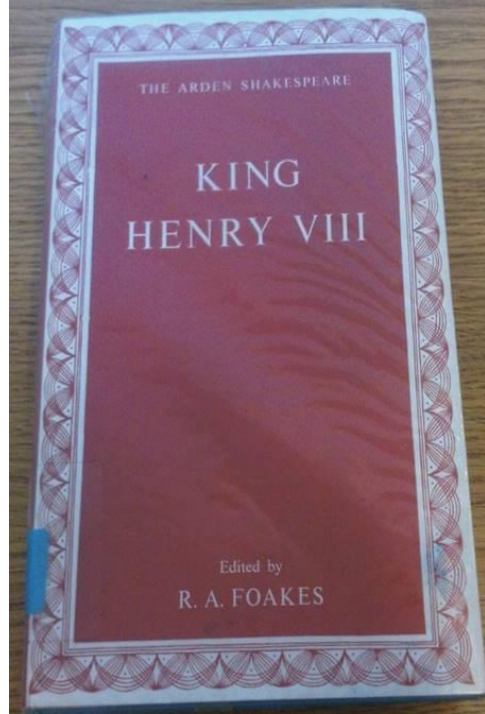


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Arden 2: 1947 to 1982

- **Post-war:** Shakespeare = British identity (Olivier *Henry V* 1944)
- **General Editor:** Una Ellis-Fermor; *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, 1951; play editors made responsible for the play texts
- **Hardback** only / **typographic** complexities
- **Fees:** like Arden 1, editors paid a fee only; 'gentleman's agreement' with General Editors
- **Long periods** to edit plays (25+ years, Jenkins' *Hamlet*, *Sonnets* unfinished)

The Arden story so far: Arden 2





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Arden 2

- **1960–** : University Paperback Ardens; dramatic UK **HE expansion**
- **Global reputation of series:**
 - Professional impact of appointment as play editor
 - Arden 'Lite' resisted = '**Arden is scholarship**'
 - Series = '**lustre**' / '**crown jewels**' for Methuen: Ruralist jackets in 1980s
- Complexity of **global production**

The Arden story so far: Arden 2





Increasing competition:

- **Oxford Shakespeare:** launched 1982, 27 titles by 2001
- **Cambridge Shakespeare:** launched 1984, 33 titles by 2001
- **Arden Shakespeare brand**, 1990s/2000s
- The **last** of the **Arden 2s** only now being replaced/updated





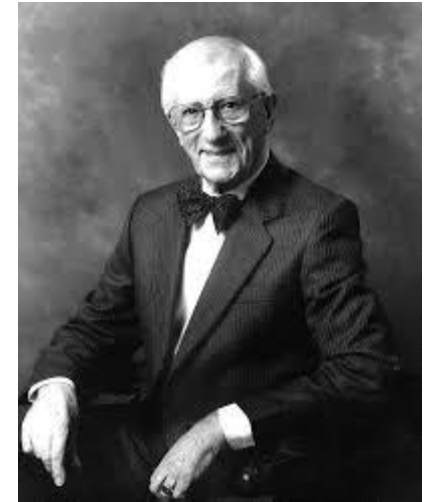
Scholarly context: ‘The New Bibliography’ to Critical scholarship

‘... the primary aim of an edition, as Dowden stated it in the first sentence of the first Arden edition, must be to give “**a trustworthy text**”.

The difficulty, with a play which lacks the author’s imprimatur and is extant in more than one form, is to know what “a trustworthy text” is....

the eighties have seen a swing away from what is **now stigmatized** as the **bibliographical approach**...

(Jenkins, 1992, p.2)



Source: Honigmann
(2001) © British
Academy 2001



From Harold Jenkins' *Hamlet*, 1982

- 'there is **only one man in the world** who is fit to take on *Hamlet*: Harold Jenkins' (Brooks quoted in Honigmann, 2001, p.561)
- **Immense scholarship**: four books + some articles; General Editor of Arden
- '**The *Hamlet* years (1954–82)**' (Honigmann, 2001, p.561)
- His role? the '**definitive**' edition of *Hamlet*.
'... all those theories which view Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as progressing to its final shape via one or more rewritings... are **quite without evidence or plausibility**.'
'Dover Wilson attempted a different solution... I think we must pronounce it **indubitably wrong**.'

(Jenkins, 1982, pp.19 and 566)



From Harold Jenkins' *Hamlet*, 1982

From his Notes (and 150pp of Longer Notes...):

- '256. **bad dreams**] Another symptom of the melancholic (Bright, p.124).'
- '56. **to be**] to have being, to exist. See ll. 56–88 LN.'*
- '115. **country matters**] physical lovemaking (with a popular pun on the first syllable). Cf. Donne,'

(Jenkins, 1982, pp. 250, , 277 and 295)

*pp.484–90: 'This **celebrated speech** is, I suppose, the most discussed in Shakespeare, and **the most misinterpreted.**'



Harold Brooks's Arden retirement speech, 1982

'I can say of **editing** as we have practised it that it affords **the finest discipline there is for a scholar and critic**, exercising him in almost all the tools he will need in other work.

The experience of editing to Arden standards (for **Ardenesse oblige**) is the first of the benefits reaped by Arden editors and general editors. Then from having published Ardens or been known to be deeply engaged in them, many of us have profited greatly in our **professorial advancement**. I could recite a list of those, past and present, whom I like to think of as **Arden Professors**....' (Brooks, 1982, p.3)



‘But my great reward has been in **Friendships**. Arden **editors** – and Peter Wait, Janice Price, and Jane Armstrong [the publishers] – are **exceptionally appreciative and likeable people**.

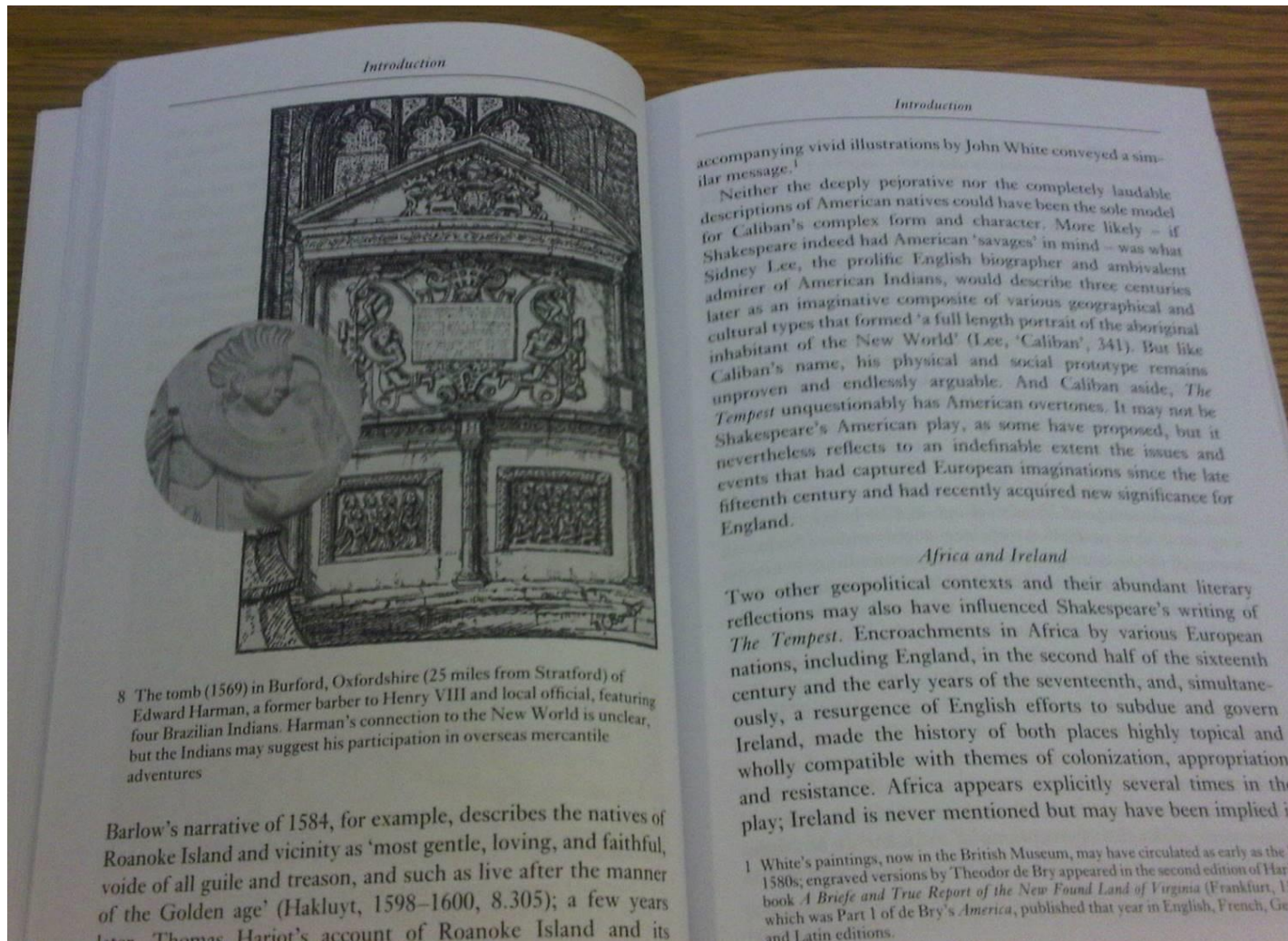
‘I should be wrong to pretend that the course of the Arden has always run with perfect smoothness. There has been fretting on occasion over the **time some of the volumes were taking...**

There was a time on **Hamlet** when I had to supply Janice Price with ammunition to repel the impatient, even to the extent of declaring that if conditions were imposed upon Harold Jenkins which I foresaw would lead to his resignation, **I should resign too, and make public the reason why...**’

(Brooks, 1982, p.3, *section breaks added*)



Arden 3



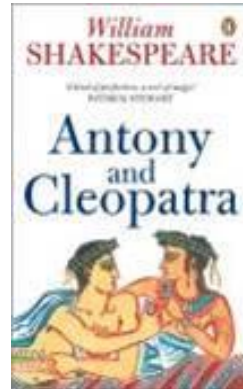


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Arden 3: 1990s to 2016/7

‘While building upon a the rich history of scholarly activity that has long shaped our understanding of Shakespeare’s works, this third series of the Arden Shakespeare is enlivened by **a new generation’s encounter with Shakespeare.**’

(General Editors’ Preface, Thompson and Taylor, 2016, p.xiv)

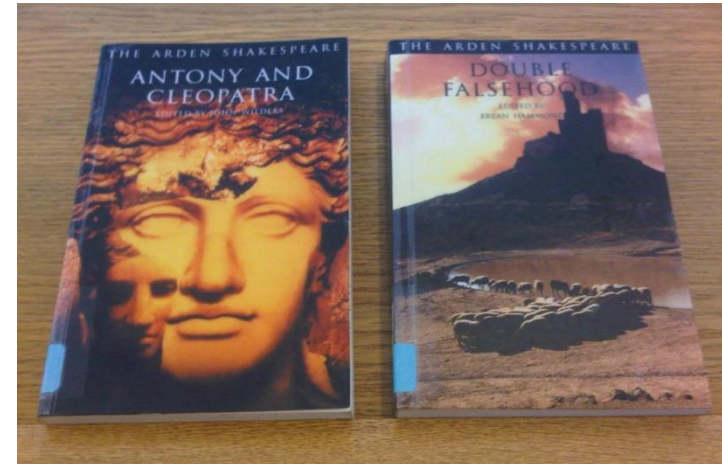


- **Competition:** OUP and CUP; Penguin; Norton; Palgrave Macmillan/RSC
- **Content/layout:** Redesign; performance notes; note additions, e.g. on religion and obscenity
- **Scholarship:** Production of texts, performance history, critical and feminist theory
- **General Editors:** recruited both a female (Ann Thompson) and a US (David Kasten) General Editor
- **Arden imprint** extended to Early Modern Plays (Cengage) and monographs (Bloomsbury)



Arden 3

- **Market shifts:** levels of study/global
- **New titles/designs:** + 'apocrypha'
- **Production:** high values; digital production
- **Lifespan:** 'In print for 20 years'
- **Payment:** Royalties in all contracts: 'You don't edit an Arden for the money' (Thompson, 2014)
- **Editors:** Women/US scholars; one Indian editor; US Black female scholar revised *Othello*





Arden's publishing turmoil, 1987–2009



- 1987:** Associated Book Publishing bought by **Thomson Corporation**; Methuen name sold; **Routledge** launched, including Arden
- 1996:** Thomson sold Routledge, retained Arden; moved to **Thomas Nelson** (Schools Arden)
- 2000:** Thomson sold Thomas Nelson; retained Arden – Arden Schools initiated; moved to **ITPS**, part of Thomson Learning
- 2007:** Thomson sold Thomson Learning to private equity firm, renamed **Cengage Learning**
- 2009:** Arden purchased from Cengage by **Bloomsbury Publishing**, part of **Methuen Drama/Bloomsbury Academic**



The Arden 3 *Hamlet*

- **Two volumes, not a conflated text:** Q2, in the 'Arden tradition', plus appendices from F for performance; + second volume with Q1 and F
- **New treatment for a new generation:**

‘Our immediate predecessor, Harold Jenkins, did his job so well that we felt there was no need to do it again in the same way – one of the many reasons why we are offering **a totally different approach to the play**’ (Thompson and Taylor, 2016, p.xix)
- **Performance history balanced with textual criticism**
- **Recognition of the cumulative nature of editing *Hamlet*:**

‘We are well aware that **we stand** (if at all) **on the shoulders of giants**...’ (Thompson and Taylor, 2016, p.9)



Arden 4: 2014 onwards

- **USPs?** meet needs of different users in print + digital?
- **Arden Shakespeare as brand:** expansion of imprint with Bloomsbury's academic acquisitions (eg Continuum, 2011)
- **Global** appeal / scholars / notes?
- Increasingly aim for **subscription** products
- **Performance media:** partnerships, film/other media?



Whither critical editions of Shakespeare?

- Whither **Humanities** scholarship?

*(Whither **universities**?)*

- Whither **publishing** (and its **editors**)?



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From 1899 to digital

The Arden Shakespeare,

Shakespearean critical scholarship and the evolution of English as a discipline

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Shakespeare: Metamorphosis

Senate House, University of London, 25 August 2016